

FOOD CONSUMPTION AND FOOD PRESERVATION PRACTICES
OF FARM FAMILIES

A basis for estimating frozen food storage space a family would use by

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Reserve

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Surveys, studies and reports from various sources on food consumption and food preservation practices of farm families gives information on amount of food used and the distribution between the various food groups for both fresh and preserved food. This type of information may serve as a useful guide in estimating the amount of frozen food storage space it would be practical for a family to make provision for, even though the practices followed may not agree with recommended family food supply plans.

The data presented here is drawn from a variety of sources and may not be considered comparable. However, the data given and other data of a similar nature does show more or less of a pattern of food consumption and food preservation practices which may be significant in estimating amount of frozen food storage needed.

A. Family Food Consumption in the United States

The study of Family Spending and Saving in "wartime", conducted by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics and the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1942, ⁽¹⁾ shows the following habits, or practices, in family food consumption:

Average total consumption of food per person per week	30 lbs.
Average consumption per person per week, all income levels, from selected food groups (bulk of frozen or canned foods come from these groups):	
Green and yellow vegetables	1.83 lbs.
Other vegetables and fruits	2.81 lbs.
(does not include potatoes, sweet potatoes, dry beans, peas)	
Meat, poultry, fish	1.83 lbs.
(the amount of meat, poultry and fish consumed at the highest income level was 2.61 lbs. per person per week)	
Amount of canned fruits and vegetables consumed in spring of 1942	2.16 lbs.
(about 1 quart) per person per week	
Amount of farm-furnished food	
1.69 lbs. of the 2.16 lbs. canned fruits and vegetables consumed per week was farm furnished	
1.11 lbs. (slightly more than 3/5) of the 1.83 lbs. of meat, poultry and fish consumed per week was farm furnished	

B. Home Food Preservation

1. Distribution of products canned in farm households in 1944

Based on a national survey made by the BAE, ⁽²⁾ the total amount of fruits and vegetables canned in farm homes in 1944 was 1,385,000,000 quarts. The

(1) Family Food Consumption in the United States, U.S.D.A., Misc. Publ. No. 550 (pp.10-13)

(2) Home Preservation of fruits and Vegetables in 1944. U.S.D.A., BAE, April 1945 (p.7)

distribution between the various items canned was, approximately, as follows:

Fruits	40 per cent
Tomatoes and tomato juice	20 " "
Jams, jellies	6 " "
Beans, (all types)	9 " "
Pickles, relishes	7 " "
Corn	6 " "
Peas	5 " "
Sauerkraut	2 " "
Greens (all types)	1 " "
Miscellaneous	4 " "
(includes sweet potatoes)	

2. Average amount of food canned per family in 1941 in areas representing the entire rural population of the country. (3)

Vegetables	102 quarts
Pickles, relishes	21 quarts
Preserves, jellies, jams	27 quarts
Fruit	88 quarts
Meat and Poultry	14 quarts
Miscellaneous	1 quart
Total	232 quarts

(Purchased food was used to can 5 quarts of the vegetables, 6 quarts of the preserves, jams, and jellies, 27 quarts of the fruit and 1 quart of the meat and poultry.)

3. Average amount of food preserved per farm family in Michigan in 1945 (4)

Canned fruit	100 quarts
Canned Vegetables	84 quarts
Canned meat	22 quarts
Brined vegetables	14 quarts
Brined meat	3 gal.
Dried fruit	0.08 lb.
Dried vegetables	0.4 lbs.
Frozen fruit	11 lbs.
Cured meat	16 lbs.
Stored fruit	18 lbs.
Stored vegetables	564 lbs.
Frozen vegetables	9 lbs.
Frozen meat	46 lbs.

(3) Rural Family Spending and Saving in Wartime. U.S.D.A., Misc. Pub. No. 520, (Table 11, page 39)

(4) Annual Report, Extension Service, Nutrition Project (unpublished) Michigan, 1945 (p.11)

POINTS BROUGHT OUT IN DATA WHICH MAY BE
SIGNIFICANT

1. Appreciable amounts of fruits, vegetables and meats (fresh and canned) consumed by farm families are not farm produced.
2. A large proportion (35 per cent + or -) of the foods canned by farm families are items that would probably not be preserved by freezing--tomatoes, tomato juice, jams, jellies, preserves, pickles, relishes, sauerkraut.
3. On an average, farm families preserve under 250 quarts of fruits, vegetables and meats by canning.

DISCUSSION

Present food preservation practices may not be too reliable as a guide to estimating amount of frozen food storage space requirements, but at that may be more reliable than recommended food supply plans. Indications that amount of food preserved by farm families does not measure up to recommended food supply plans is borne out in many State Extension Specialists reports. Not enough is known about how freezing will alter food consumption or food preservation practices. The following questions may be raised on this point:

Will freezing replace all canning except for those items which are not suitable for freezing, or practical to freeze?

Will freezing result in an increase in total food consumption or will the amount of food consumed remain about the same but be distributed differently?

Will farm families purchase as much food for freezing as they now purchase for canning, or will they purchase the frozen product as needed and avoid storage expense?

If the price of food drops, will they be willing to preserve cheap food by an expensive method?

Will freezing replace any other methods of food preservation commonly practiced, such as storage for fresh vegetables and fruits?

